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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI AMBASSADOR TO KUWAIT: POSSIBLE MOVEMENT,
BUT NO TANGIBLE PROGRESS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 1303

[B](#). BAGHDAD 918

[C](#). 08 BAGHDAD 3148

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor John Fox for reason 1.4 (d).

[1](#). (C) At a June 22 meeting with Mohammed Al-Hamaimidi, Director of the MFA's North America Office, Deputy PolCouns urged that Iraq appoint an ambassador to Kuwait, soon. Reiterating points made repeatedly by the Ambassador, DCM, and others to Iraqi officials over the past several months (reftels), he stressed that the appointment of an ambassador would be an important symbolic recognition of sovereignty that would resonate with Kuwait, that having an ambassador would facilitate the resolution of bilateral issues, and that the optics of Iraq's not reciprocating Kuwait's appointment of an ambassador to Baghdad were not good. (Note: Deputy PolCouns and Al-Hamaimidi also discussed Chapter VII issues; this will be reported septel. End note.)

[2](#). (C) Al-Hamaimidi said there has been no appointment of an ambassador to Kuwait because this nomination, along with 50-60 others, is stuck in parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. He confirmed what other contacts have told us: that there is an informal quota system for nominating senior officials, including ambassadors, and that some parties believe the current ambassadorial list does not give them a fair share of the spoils and thus are blocking it. A leading MP's chief of staff told us recently that there is another problem: many of the nominees are unqualified. Al-Hamaimidi said that five of the ambassadorial nominees are career diplomats (and that he is one of them). He noted that he had heard that ten nominees will be voted out of committee in the next two weeks -- the five career diplomats, and five political appointees (they will then need to be approved by a majority plenary vote). He did not know if the ambassador to Kuwait would be among these.

[3](#). (C) Comment: Other contacts have noted that the Foreign Affairs Committee has been conducting interviews and vetting ambassadorial nominees. There have also been recent press reports on the ambassadorial list and the quota system. These could be indications that the list -- or at least some of the nominees, as Al-Hamaimidi expects -- will be voted out of committee. But we have heard many times before of imminent parliamentary action on important legislative items that in fact doesn't transpire. We also note that Foreign Minister Zebari told visiting U/S Burns on May 12 (ref A) that the Iraqi ambassador to Kuwait would be a political appointee. If Al-Hamaimidi is right that five of the ten nominees poised to be voted out of committee are the career diplomats, this further reduces the chances that the ambassador to Kuwait will be among the first names approved.

[4](#). (C) It is unclear when the ambassador to Kuwait nomination was conveyed to Parliament. When we raised the need to appoint an ambassador to Kuwait with Iraqi officials last fall, they provided an assortment of reasons for the delay in doing so, including lack of agreement on an appropriate nominee between the Prime Minister's Office and the MFA. The PM's chief of Staff, Tariq Abdullah, repeatedly

expressed unhappiness with the quality of ambassadorial nominees, noting that the recommended individuals did not "represent the new Iraq," i.e., they were Baathists. In May Abdullah told us that they had finally submitted a name (Mohammed Hussein Bakr, NFI) to Parliament for approval, but so far, Parliament has not acted on his nomination. We will follow up with the Foreign Affairs Committee and continue to push the GOI to appoint an ambassador to Kuwait. We will Qpush the GOI to appoint an ambassador to Kuwait. We will also seek to find out more about the putative nominee. End comment.

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